## Amendments to the Claims

1.    (Currently Amended)        A method for triggering the transmission of
a flow control packet between a receiving device and a sending device in a
communication network, the method comprising:

monitoring free space in a buffer associated with the receiving device to
determine if the free space available in the buffer has increased above a threshold,
wherein the threshold is relative to a variable free space amount;

setting the variable free space amount to a lowest level of free space available
monitored in the buffer since a flow control packet was last sent; and

sending a flow control packet to the sending device in response to a determination
that the free space available in the buffer has increased above the threshold, the flow
control packet indicating the amount of free space available in the buffer.

2.    (Original)    The method of claim 1 wherein the threshold is a
predetermined level.

3.    (Original)    The method of claim 2 further comprising, before
monitoring to determine if the free space available in the buffer has increased above the
threshold, monitoring free space in the buffer to determine if the free space available in
the buffer has fallen below a bottom threshold that is smaller than the threshold.

4.    (Cancelled)

5.    (Cancelled)

6.    (Currently Amended)        The method of claim 1 5 wherein the
threshold equals the variable free space amount plus a predetermined offset.

7.    (Original)    The method of claim 1 further comprising sending a flow
control packet if a predetermined number of clock cycles has passed since a flow control

packet was last sent.

8. (Currently Amended)    In a communication network that requires a

2    receiving device to send a sending device a flow control packet containing an amount

indicative of available free space in a receiving buffer at least once every predetermined

4    number of clock cycles, the method comprising:

determining if the free space available in the buffer has increased above a

6    threshold, wherein the threshold is relative to a variable free space amount;

setting the variable free space amount to a lowest level of free space available

8    monitored in the buffer since a flow control packet was last sent; and

sending a flow control packet to the sending device in response to a determination

10    that the free space available in the buffer has increased above the threshold.


9. (Original)    The method of claim 8 wherein the threshold is a

2    predetermined level.


10. (Original)    The method of claim 9 further comprising before the act of

2    determining, monitoring free space in the buffer to determine if the free space available

in the buffer has fallen below a bottom threshold that is smaller than the threshold.


11. (Cancelled)


12. (Cancelled)


13. (Currently Amended)    The method of claim 8 12 wherein the

2    threshold equals the variable free space amount plus a predetermined offset.


14. (Original)    The method of claim 8 further comprising sending a flow

2    control packet if a given number of clock cycles, no greater than the predetermined

number, has passed since a flow control packet was last sent.

15.     (Currently Amended)     A method for triggering the transmission of

2  a flow control packet between a receiving device and a sending device in a

communication network, the method comprising:

4       setting a predetermined offset;

        determining an amount of free space in a buffer associated with the receiving

6  device;

        recording the amount of free space in a storage location;

8       updating the amount in the storage location as the amount of free space becomes

less than the amount in the storage location;

10      comparing the amount of free space in the buffer to the sum of the amount in the

storage location plus the [[a]] predetermined offset; and

12      triggering a flow control packet when the amount of free space has increased a

sufficient amount as determined by the comparison.


16.     (Cancelled)


17.     (Original)     A method according to claim 15 wherein determining an

2  amount of free space comprises subtracting a current amount of data in the buffer from a

known capacity of the buffer.


18.     (Original)     A method according to claim 15 wherein determining an

2  amount of free space comprises:

        reading a first pointer corresponding to a read position in the buffer;

4       reading a second pointer corresponding to a write position in the buffer;

        determining an amount of used space between the second pointer and the first

6  pointer; and

        calculating a difference between the amount of used space and a known capacity

8  of the buffer to arrive at the amount of free space.


19.     (Original)     A method according to claim 15 wherein determining an

2  amount of free space comprises:

reading a first address corresponding to a read position in the buffer;

4          reading a second address corresponding to a write position in the buffer;

obtaining a difference between the second address and the first address to

6    determine an amount of used space; and

subtracting the amount of used space from a known capacity of the buffer to

8    arrive at the amount of free space.


20.    (Original)    A method according to claim 15 wherein the buffer is a

2    first in first out buffer.


21.    (Original)    A method according to claim 15 wherein the flow control

2    packet includes an amount indicative of the amount of free space in the buffer.